

legislation to reignite the United Nations resolution which has not been implemented to create a peace commission comprised of women to be involved in the Middle East peace process and peace processes around the world.

I commend the fact that there is an envoy appointed by the President, but I would also commend the names of former Presidents Jimmy Carter, William Clinton and George Bush, and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to be engaged in this process that should not be a start and stop, but rather an ongoing process for peace.

Women bring a unique perspective to peace, and this Oslo, Norway summit, in cooperation with the Nobel Peace Institute, is imperative.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I ask for an investigation into the findings of the weapons of mass destruction, and I believe we can do this in the name of truth.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

FIGHTING AUTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, normally when I come down here, I bring a litany of pictures, a poster, to show the children who have been damaged, their parents believe, by the mercury that has been used in children's vaccines.

Most Americans do not know this, but since the 1930s, many if not most of our vaccinations for children have contained a product called thimerosal, which is partially mercury, and Members know mercury is toxic to the human brain. As children started getting more and more vaccinations required by school boards across the country, the children got more and more mercury injected into their bodies. My grandson received nine shots in one day as an infant, and seven of those contained mercury. Within a matter of a couple of days he became autistic.

People do not know what autism is unless they have experienced it. He ran around flapping his arms. He was a normal child, would walk, talk, smile and laugh like other children, but he flapped his arms, ran around banging his head against the wall, lost his ability to communicate, and he would not look you in the eye anymore. He has had constant diarrhea or constipation, alternating between the two.

Parents across the country have experienced this. I have received thousands of letters from parents who have autistic children who are convinced that the mercury in these vaccines,

which has a cumulative effect on the brain, was a contributing factor to their autism.

About 10 years ago, 1 in 10,000 children were adjudged to be autistic. Now it is 1 in 200. We have a 50-fold increase. It is the biggest epidemic that we can remember as far as children are concerned, and yet the American public is not aware of it. We really have to do something about it.

Back in the 1980s, in order to protect the pharmaceutical companies, we passed the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund Program, and it protected the pharmaceutical companies against lawsuits, but in exchange there was money being put into a fund from each vaccination to take care of those children or adults damaged by vaccinations. It now has \$1.8 billion in it. It was supposed to be a nonadversarial program, but it has become very adversarial.

The parents of these children who have had to mortgage their homes and sell their property to help their children, are going bankrupt to take care of their children, have not been able to get a dime out of the fund. And many of those parents did not get in within the 3-year time limit the law required because they were not aware that we had vaccination injury compensation program, and many were not aware that their children were adjudged autistic.

Mr. Speaker, we have to open that program up so that every parent has access to the fund. If we can prove that mercury was the culprit in their children's autism, they ought to be able to get funds from that fund to take care of their family and all of the expenses that they are incurring.

We need to get more money for the IDEA program to help with remedial education for these children that can be helped. If we do not deal with it right now, in 10-15 years when these children become adults, we are going to have a terrible problem because they will not be productive citizens. Many will have to be institutionalized, becoming a burden on the taxpayers. The parents of these children do not want to face that.

Mr. Speaker, we really need to address this issue in both the House and the other body to make sure that every parent has access to the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund and has a fair hearing, their fair day in court.

□ 1930

GIs FRUSTRATED BY LACK OF RESPONSE TO MEDICAL NEED IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this weekend in our local newspaper and across this country, a major story ap-

peared with a photo that is unforgettable, a photo of Sergeant David Borell and Sergeant First Class Bryan Pacholski, both deployed outside of Baghdad, both members of the 323rd Military Police Company based in Toledo, Ohio, the center of my district. The title of the article is "Children's Suffering Wounds GIs; Toledo Soldier Frustrated by Lack of Response to Medical Need." I am going to include this article, the full article, in the RECORD tonight along with Sergeant Borell's comments; also a letter I am sending to Secretary Rumsfeld this evening asking that based on these reports out of Iraq, I am requesting a personal meeting with the Secretary to propose an expedited schedule by the United States to establish temporary field hospitals in Iraq, perhaps in concert with our Arab allies, serving the wounded and the suffering.

With Baghdad's early fall, sufficient funds have been appropriated by our Appropriations Committee to accommodate these facilities. We can work with other organizations around the world, but without question the United States is in the lead now. It is important that we rise to this moral imperative. It is our sacred obligation to do so.

Let me report what Sergeant David Borell says, who, by the way, should get a promotion by the Department of Defense for his honor. He works close to a sign that reads: "Working Together With the Iraqi People for Peace and Prosperity." That sign is placed near the North Gate to Sustainer Army Airfield northwest of Baghdad. He says, "The implications of those words, 'Working Together With the Iraqi People for Peace and Prosperity,' it would seem, are far-reaching. Perhaps even all-encompassing. To me, it would seem to say that we, the Americans, are here to help. Help restore the Iraqi economy, help restore law and order, help the Iraqi people build anew that which has been taken from them. And, surely, help them in their times of dire need. Help them when there are truly none others for them to turn to."

The photo says it all: "Sergeant First Class Bryan Pacholski comforts Sergeant David Borell, both from Toledo." Why is he comforting Sergeant Borell? And it says, Sergeant Borell "saw something that flies in the face of every moral lesson I have ever learned from my leadership in the military." He says, "I used to be proud of what I'm doing and of being an American soldier, but after today I wonder if I will still be able to carry the title soldier with any pride at all. Or simply with the knowledge that a soldier couldn't even help three small severely burned children." He says, "We came here to depose Saddam Hussein, a mission we accomplished. But the second mission was one of greater importance and purpose, to be part of a force that would serve to provide the Iraqi people with a freedom that they have never known." It seemed to him to be the noblest mission of all. In almost 14 years

of military service, the Army taught him many things, duty, honor, obligation; and though he was also taught to be a warrior, at the same time he thought he was taught to be a humanitarian. But he saw something during his service in the last week which caused him to question all of that.

While working at that North Gate, he was approached by an Iraqi father in need of assistance who took him to the back of his car where his wife and three children waited with a patience which could only have been borne out of a life of adversity. Once there, the father showed him his first son. He was a boy of 10 or 11 years of age. His eyes were a deep shade of brown, and he stared at the sergeant without tears. His mother held him in her arms and gently fanned him with a piece of cardboard both for comfort and to keep flies off of him. Across his body were wounds of unimaginable origin. Most of his legs and arms were singed clean of the top layers of flesh. His face was contorted with the same manner of burns. The sergeant says, "I can only imagine the intensity of the pain he was in. He said nothing to me, but his eyes pleaded with me nonetheless. He was in need of help, the very help I was trained to offer."

And so the sergeant called the doctors in the field and it took them an hour to arrive. In the front seat of this same car were his two sisters equally burned, one around 5 years old and the older 8 or 9. One blister on her right hand was the size of a baseball. Like their brother, they did not even complain. They made no sound at all. And the chain of command decided they deserved no treatment, and they turned them away.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end my remarks tonight and read the last two sentences that say, "The Army failed three young children in Iraq today for no reason. After today, I wonder if I will still be able to carry the title soldier with any pride at all, because this soldier couldn't even help three small children."

Secretary Rumsfeld, we need your help. We need field hospitals in Iraq now.

SIRS: The following incident occurred on 13 June 2003. Any exposure you can create for this would be greatly appreciated. Also there when this happened were correspondents or representatives of FoxNews, the Associated Press, the New York Times, the LA Times, the Chicago Tribune, and various foreign media.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE IRAQI PEOPLE
FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

That's what the sign reads at the North Gate to Sustainer Army Airfield Northwest of Baghdad. The implications of those words, it would seem, are far-reaching. Perhaps even all-encompassing. To me, it would seem to say that we, the Americans, are here to help. Help restore the Iraqi economy, help restore law and order help the Iraqi people build anew that which has been taken from them. And, surely, help them in their times of dire need. Help them when there are truly none others for them to turn to.

As a military force, we came to this country under two pretenses. One, to rid the

world of what has been termed a dire and immediate threat to world peace. This threat was embodied in Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party he led. We accomplished, if not completely, then at least practically, that goal. Saddam is no longer in a place of power here. Instead, we created, hopefully, a foundation for the Iraqi people to rule themselves. Our second pretense was much more enigmatic. We came to give the Iraqi people peace and freedom such as many Americans have known all their lives. This second mission was, to me, one of greater import and purpose. I came to be a part of that force that would serve to provide the Iraqi people with a freedom that they have never known. It seemed to me a noble mission at the least.

In almost 14 years of military service, the Army has taught me many things. Most of what I believe about duty, honor and obligation has come from those things I learned as a young soldier. I was taught to be a warrior and an unstoppable, indefatigable combat power, but, at the same time, to be a humanitarian. To give any assistance I could possibly provide to those people who were innocent of hostilities or even those who were not but who no longer represented a threat to U.S. forces. I learned that the American military was meant to be much more than a combat force. That we are a peacekeeping force, trained and equipped not only for the perils of combat, but also, and sometimes above all else to help. To build instead of destroy. I came to Iraq as a Military Policeman to rebuild and practice that which has been so deeply ingrained in me throughout those years of military service. And to be a part of that greater purpose I believe we all seek.

But today, I saw something which caused me to question exactly where the Army as an institution places its teachings. I saw something that flies in the face of every moral lesson I have ever learned from my leadership in the military. Moreover, it flew in the face of simple human dignity and obligation.

While working at that North Gate of Sustainer Army Airfield, not far from the sign at the entrance, I was approached by an Iraqi father in need of assistance. He took me back to his car where his wife and three children waited with a patience that could only have been born of a life of adversity. Once there, he showed me first his son. He was a boy of perhaps 10 or 11 years old. His eyes were a deep shade of brown and stared at me without tears. His mother held him in her arms and gently fanned him with a piece of cardboard both for comfort and to keep flies off of him. Across his body were wounds of unimaginable origin. Most of his legs and arms were singed clean of the top layers of flesh. His face was contorted with the same manner of burns. I can only imagine the intensity of the pain he was in. He said nothing to me, but his eyes pleaded with me nonetheless. He was in need of help. The very help that I was trained to offer. In fact, the very help I was taught, and fervently believe, it is my duty to offer. He didn't ask much, or so I thought. Only some relief from the pain that a boy his age should never have to endure.

But the damage didn't end there. In the front seat were his sisters. The youngest was around 5 years old and the older one around 8 or 9. They too were covered in burns. The five year old had hands covered with burns. The right half of her face had also been burned. On her right hand was a blister the size of a baseball. The eight year old suffered the same agonizing injuries. Both her arms and hands and the left side of her face were covered. Like their brother, they did not cry nor even complain. They made no sound at all. One look into their eyes, though, and no

word of complaint was necessary. No verbal communication could possibly have conveyed the amount of pain or suffering they were going through. But, looking into their eyes, I knew that they were pleading with me to help. If not as an American soldier, trained and equipped to do so, than as a fellow human. They were asking me and they were asking America. I could not more ignore this pleading than if it were to have come from my own daughters. And it was my own daughters I saw when I looked at these young girls.

Without hesitation, I made contact with the only people available to me and requested assistance. My chain of command contacted the base hospital and, after what seemed an eternity to me but was more realistically probably only an hour or so, assistance finally came in the form of two Majors, both doctors, from the base hospital. But even an hour of so seemed too long to me. Judging from the traffic on the radio, there was apparently lengthy discussion as to whether or not any assistance at all would be forthcoming. But it did finally come, and I fully believed that these children would receive at least some care. At minimum, a token amount to relieve their suffering until something else could be done. My beliefs, my faith in the Army were not to be realized.

Both "doctors" looked briefly at the son. Perhaps a minute. No probing, no questioning as to the extent of the injuries. No discussion as to how they could help. And, without so much as a cursory examination of the girls, announced that there was nothing they could do. "Long-term care" is what they said was needed. "These wounds are not life-threatening" was emphatically pronounced. And, most injuriously to my conscience, that we, as Americans, had not caused the wounds and, thusly, would not treat them. I was informed that the "rules of engagement" for the treatment of local nationals was that the wounds had to threaten life, limb or eyesight or had to have been caused by Americans. The children were coarsely sent on their way with no treatment administered. I was left with nothing to answer the pleading of these children but to empty my first aid bag of anything useful to give their father. And empty it I did, but to what end? It wasn't enough and he and I both knew it.

What would it have cost us to treat these children? A few dollars perhaps. Some investment of time and resources. But are we not here for just that purpose? Did we not depose the "evil regime"? Or did we just replace it with one of our own making? I cannot imagine the heartlessness required to look into the eyes of a child in horrid pain and suffering and, with medical resources only a brief trip up the road, ignore their plight as though they are insignificant. Only Iraqis seeking that which they should be able to provide themselves. "We are not here to be the treatment center for the country." These words were actually spoken to me by one of the "doctors". But, if not us, then who? The local "hospital", if it can even be called that, had already refused them treatment. There was no one else.

The last time I checked, prior to the arrival of American and coalition forces, the Iraqi people had a government, albeit an appalling one. And they had an infrastructure, albeit a surely inadequate one. But, we, in our "noble" effort to give the Iraqi people freedom and secure peace for the world, have taken what little they had away. They no longer have any real form of government, and, lacking that, no true infrastructure. So who is to provide these things taken from them? By virtue of the morals and standards taught me by the Army, we, as Americans, are. It is we who are here to "work together". It is we who mean to give the Iraqis

"peace and prosperity." Apparently, working together does not mean medical treatment for children who have done nothing wrong and have nowhere else to turn.

I wear a silver bracelet on my arm. It was given to me by my wife before I was deployed here. On one side is engraved "Duty, Honor, Country" and on the reverse is "With Love, Rachelle". I wear it to remind me of why I'm here. Why I'm so far from my wife and children, why I'm sacrificing my time and my energy and placing myself at personal risk of injury or death. "Duty, Honor, Country" is what I have been taught for almost 14 years. But the Army failed 3 young children today for no reason. And, in so doing, they betrayed those values. I used to be proud of what I'm doing and of being an American soldier. After today, I wonder if I will still be able to carry the title "soldier" with any pride at all. Or simply with the knowledge that a "soldier" couldn't even help 3 small children.

David J. Borell,
Sergeant, US Army,
323rd Military Police Company,
Balad, Iraq,
North Gate Sustainer Army Airfield,
(Northwest of Baghdad)

[From the Toledo Blade, June 14, 2003]

CHILDREN'S SUFFERING WOUNDS GIS

TOLEDO SOLDIER WANTS TO HELP INJURED IRAQI
CHILDREN

(By Joe Mahr)

Ohio Army National Guard Sgt. David Borell peered into a car outside his Iraqi base yesterday, and the Toledoan's mission seemed obvious.

There sat three children with burns on their arms, legs, and faces. One had layers of skin singed from his extremities. Another had a baseball-sized welt on her hand. The look in their eyes said one thing: Help.

The military police sergeant quickly radioed for medics, but it took about an hour for doctors to arrive. Even then, the doctors refused to help—saying the wounds weren't "life threatening." And the sergeant could think only of how he'd react if it were his children back home suffering such pain.

After the doctors left, he broke down.

"I saw something that flies in the face of every moral lesson I have ever learned from my leadership in the military," he wrote in an e-mail sent to The Blade last night.

The 30-year-old's frustration is not the only angst among family, friends, and soldiers of Toledo's 323rd Military Police Company, which has been deployed for 16 of the past 20 months.

They've spent the past two months in Kuwait and Iraq—most of that time based on one of the hottest spots since the declared end of major combat: Balad, about 40 miles northwest of Baghdad.

They've been shot at, had rocks thrown at them, and endured triple-digit heat—with no formal date set for return. Back home, some of their loved ones have begun asking elected leaders to get the Army to set a return date, if only a tentative one, for a unit that could be in Iraq until January, and perhaps longer.

"We understand they've got to be there," said Brad Eckhart, whose wife is a medic with 323rd. "But they're being jerked around, and that's really damaging morale."

For Sergeant Borell, he said the frustration erupted during a shift guarding the north gate of the Sustainer Army Airfield—where the sign reads "Working together with the Iraqi people for peace and prosperity."

The 1991 Sylvania Southview High School graduate has made a career of the military, spending 13 years alternating between the regular forces and the Guard. He said the mis-

sion in Iraq seemed noble when the 323rd arrived: Toppling a cruel dictator who threatened world peace and helping the Iraqi people build a new country.

The latter mission seemed a more important and fitting role, he said, for an Army that taught him "to be a warrior, and an unstoppable, indefatigable combat power, but, at the same time, to be a humanitarian."

So he didn't hesitate when a father approached him outside the base gate yesterday to show the sergeant his injured children—who apparently were playing with explosive material.

"He took me back to his car where his wife and three children waited with a patience that could only have been born of a life of adversity," Sergeant Borell recalled.

The mother held a 10 or 11-year-old in her arms, fanning the boy's face with a piece of cardboard to keep the flies off and soothe what the sergeant described as "wounds of unimaginable origin."

"Most of his legs and arms were singed clean of the top layers of flesh," Sergeant Borell said. "His face was contorted with the same manner of burns. I can only imagine the intensity of the pain he was in."

In the front seat, a girl age 8 or 9 had her arms, hands, and the left side of her face covered with burns. Beside her was a girl about 5, the right side of her face covered with burns, and a baseball-sized welt on her hand.

They made no sounds, the sergeant said, but it didn't matter.

"No verbal communication could possibly have conveyed the amount of pain of suffering they were going through," he said. "But looking into their eyes, I knew that they were pleading with me to help. If not as an American soldier, trained and equipped to do so, then as a fellow human. They were asking me and they were asking America."

The sergeant passed on the request to his commanders, who contacted the base hospital, which eventually sent two doctors with the rank of major. They looked at the boy for "perhaps a minute . . . and without so much as a cursory examination of the girls, announced that there was nothing they could do."

The doctors told the sergeant that the wounds were not life-threatening, that the children needed long-term care, and that it wasn't the Americans' responsibility.

Sergeant Borell said that one doctor told him: "We are not here to be the treatment center for the country."

The local hospital already had refused to treat the children. So the sergeant gave the father all the supplies from his personal medical bag, and the father left.

"The last time I checked, prior to the arrival of American and coalition forces, the Iraqi people had a government, albeit an appalling one," the sergeant said. "And they had an infrastructure, albeit a surely inadequate one. But, we, in our 'noble' effort to give the Iraqi people freedom and secure peace for the world, have taken what little they had away . . . So who is to provide these things taken from them?"

The incident was the latest for a unit that has been anything but the old stereotype of "weekend warriors." After the 2001 terrorist attacks, they spent 11 months guarding Fort Bragg, N.C. They returned home for four months, only to be called up for the Iraq war.

The military can't provide direct accounts of what the unit has experienced. But soldiers, in phone calls and e-mails to family and friends, talk about the night a convoy was ambushed by gunfire. Nobody was hurt. They talk of being on patrol and repeatedly having rocks hurled at them.

They now live in an old airport hangar, eating one hot meal a day and the rest from

military Meals Ready to Eat, Mr. Eckhart said. They must still use "field toilets."

And rumors continue to circulate about the unit's fate. A Toledo TV station erroneously reported recently that the 323rd was coming home "soon." Another rumor has the unit, or at least some members, headed to Kosovo after Iraq.

Their orders in Iraq are for 365 days, taking them to mid-January, 2004. The Army could keep them another year, but that's unlikely, said Maj. Neal O'Brien, of the Ohio National Guard.

"Obviously, the hope is that they're back earlier, and any day less than a year is a good day," he said. "There's always a chance they could potentially be extended, but it's certainly not expected."

Still, he said, the Ohio National Guard has no way of knowing a formal date of return because when a unit is mobilized for federal duty, the Army assumes complete control over the unit. And the Army isn't offering a date of return.

The National Guard leadership, based in Columbus, tries to keep in touch with its units in Iraq. But Lt. Col. Mike Ore said he hadn't yet heard of the incident with Sergeant Borell and didn't know if the soldier's account was accurate.

"I know the 323rd has been engaged in some pretty heavy stuff," Colonel Ore said.

In previous e-mails back home, Sergeant Borell talked of heat that reached 126 degrees and how the Iraqis had stockpiled weapons all over the country. U.S. troops tried to keep the Iraqi children from playing with the weapons, but it was difficult.

He didn't complain about military leadership until sending the latest e-mail to the media and his family last night, said his father, John Borell.

"For him to write that e-mail, it must have affected him greatly," his father said.

Sergeant Borell, a father of two and stepfather of one, ended his e-mail questioning why he was sacrificing his time, energy, and potentially his life.

"I used to be proud of what I'm doing and of being an American soldier," he said. "After today, I wonder if I will still be able to carry the title 'soldier' with any pride at all. Or simply with the knowledge that a 'soldier' couldn't even help three small children."

[From the Toledo Blade, June 15, 2003]

KAPTUR TO PRESS RUMSFIELD ON TOLEDO GI'S
'REALITY CHECK', IRAQI KIDS' WOUNDS
SPARK POLICY DEBATE

(By Joe Mahr)

From his hot and dusty base in northern Iraq, Ohio Army National Guard Sgt. David Borell typed an e-mail criticizing the U.S. military's lack of treatment for severely burned Iraqi children.

A day later, the Sylvania native got the attention of his congressman, U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo). She pledged yesterday to speak directly with the secretary of defense himself—an action that could rekindle an international debate over how much U.S. forces should, or even can, help injured Iraqis.

"[Sergeant Borell] is in the finest tradition of the American military," Miss Kaptur said yesterday. "I am going to make sure that the fact that he gave a ground-zero reality check from there can guide policy-makers at the highest level."

Sergeant Borell, of the Toledo-based 323rd Military Police Company, complained Friday that he tried to get medical help for three children with severe burns on the arms, legs, and faces, but Army doctors told him that the children's wounds were not life-threatening and it was not the Americans' duty to help.

After having to send the family on its way without treatment, the sergeant broke down and had to be comforted by his platoon leader, Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Pacholski. The moment was captured by an Associated Press photographer, and the picture was printed yesterday in *The Blade* and newspapers across the country.

Upon seeing the picture and article in *The Blade*, Miss Kaptur said she shared the outrage of the 30-year-old military police sergeant. She said it's not only a moral duty for America, but a strategic one that can help build support in an Arab world that increasingly questions America's motives in Iraq.

"We are losing the battle for respect in that region," said Miss Kaptur, who opposed President Bush's decision to go to war. "We might command the ground—or hold the ground for the moment—but we have to gain the hearts and minds of the people."

Miss Kaptur's criticism was shared by some who contacted *The Blade* yesterday, such as Dave Pacholski, the brother of the sergeant who comforted Sergeant Borell Friday.

"I have two little ones, and I find it irresponsible on anybody's part to just walk away and say there's nothing they can do," he said. "Not only is that ignorant, but it was totally against what doctors do."

But others said the American military is doing the best it can in what is still a dangerous war zone, and they questioned whether anyone should pass judgment on a scenario before hearing the side of military officials, which was not available Friday or yesterday.

Maj. John Dzienny, a Toledo native now serving with U.S. Army special forces in Iraq, wrote in an e-mail that he has seen only "compassion and resolve" by American forces.

"It is the hope of all of us over here to see these people one day free and safe, just as we enjoy at home. These things take time, however, and it can strain the heart to not have an instant solution. All an individual can do is the best he or she can," he said.

It is not a new debate.

The nonprofit group Doctors Without Borders complained three weeks after U.S. troops rolled into Baghdad that the U.S.-led coalition hierarchy had failed to restart Iraq's health-care system.

The group's international council president, Dr. Martin Rostrup, not only blamed U.S. forces for failing to stop the looting at many hospitals, but for not setting up an administrative health system to replace Saddam's—which he said was required under the Geneva Convention.

"They are definitely responsible to see that basic services are put in place very rapidly so as to avoid suffering of people. And this has not taken place. After three weeks, the hospitals are in disarray and I find that unacceptable," he told reporters then, according to an Internet transcript of a May 3 news conference.

It's unclear now how much that's changed. The group's spokesman said yesterday that he could not provide an immediate assessment of Iraq's current health-care system.

And the human rights group Amnesty International has yet to pass judgment on whether the U.S.-led coalition is doing enough.

"The legal standard is a hard one to measure," group spokesman Alistair Hodgett said. "But I think you can't read an account like that account [by Sergeant Borell] and not feel like the U.S. should be doing more."

A U.S. military spokesman said Iraqis have a better health-care system now than before. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Klee, speaking on behalf of the U.S. Central Command, said yesterday that the military is doing the best

it can to help as many civilians as possible in a country roughly the size of California.

"We are providing health care to Iraqis, but we don't have the infrastructure to support the entire Iraqi civilian population," said Commander Klee, who is based in Tampa.

He said he was unable to immediately provide the military's detailed rules for when its field hospitals must accept Iraqi civilians, but he said at the very least military hospitals treat any civilians with life-threatening injuries. The rest are referred to local, civilian-run hospitals.

He also said he was unable to immediately conform Sergeant Borell's account of the burned children not getting medical attention. But he said that, regardless, the military would not punish the sergeant for speaking out—a key worry of Congressman Kaptur.

"As long as he's speaking of his own personal opinions, he's more than welcome to do that," Commander Klee said. "He just can't speak for the military. He can express his views. But when it comes to policy and official statements, that's really our bailiwick."

Contacted via e-mail at their base 30 miles northwest of Baghdad, other soldiers in the 323rd also were unable to confirm the sergeant's account of the incident. But 1st Sgt. Robert Orwig confirmed that the unit's Balad base treats only civilians injured by an American or who have an injury that could involve a loss of life, limb, or an eye. Still, the 323rd soldiers routinely call the base hospital anyway when an injured Iraqi approaches, and let the hospital staff formally refuse to treat the injured.

"It is hard for our soldiers to have to turn the children away, but that is the guidance we have and have to go by," he said.

"This wasn't the first incident that children were sent away," he added. "[It] probably won't be the last."

Miss Kaptur, however, hopes it is the last. She said she will seek out Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as well as House leaders from both parties when she returns to Washington tomorrow. She said the military should be able to set up more field hospitals to treat wounded Iraqis until the Iraqi civilian hospitals can do the job.

If the U.S. military can't do it, Miss Kaptur said, other international groups or even American citizens should.

"I know the American people. We could fill a cargo plane out here at Toledo Express and equip the first field hospital ourselves," she said.

As for Sergeant Borell, he wrote in an e-mail to *The Blade* yesterday that the Iraqi family hadn't returned yet to the base to seek help for their children.

"I imagine one referral is enough for them," he said.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2003.

Hon. DONALD H. RUMSFELD,
Secretary, Department of Defense,
The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY RUMSFELD: Based on these articles, I am requesting a personal meeting with you. I wish to propose an expedited schedule by the U.S. to establish temporary field hospitals in Iraq, perhaps in concert with our Arab allies, serving the wounded and suffering. With Baghdad's early fall, sufficient funds have been appropriated to accommodate these facilities.

In addition, UN health organizations, Doctors Without Borders, and Americans from all walks of life should be engaged in this moral imperative. Our forces, or those of coalition allies, can be used to secure the perimeters where such field health services would be offered.

As a representative from the Arab-American crescent that lies between Toledo, Ohio, Dearborn, Michigan, and Cleveland, Ohio, I know our region would rise to the occasion of equipping and staffing the first such hospital. Equally, America should match our commitment.

It is now our obligation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

MARCY KAPTUR,
U.S. Representative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEDICARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, we have had a busy agenda since we started back into session in January. I am like a lot of freshmen. I feel like we have spent a lot of time looking at reform issues. That is something that my constituents want to see, and it is certainly something where I look forward to placing a good bit of my energy as we look for waste, fraud and abuse in government and look for opportunities to reform the system and to lower the cost of doing business with the government.

We have reformed education. We have lowered taxes. We have provided our Nation's military servicemen and women with a pay increase. And Republicans are now working to ensure that America's seniors have access to affordable, quality health care that will help lessen the financial burden of prescription medications.

Any effort to provide a prescription drug benefit absolutely must include a Medicare reform plan that not only preserves the system for today's seniors and for future generations but also provides seniors with a Medicare that is more efficient and flexible. Medicare must include the market-based incentives that have fueled research and development of products that are keeping us healthier longer and improving the lives of millions of Americans. There are three issues that virtually all senior citizens agree on. These three critical components of the reform initiative are affordability, access and choice. These are three premises that we need to be sure to include in our plan.

On the first point, affordability, Medicare reform legislation must make health care more affordable for seniors. Currently seniors are paying more on doctor visits and prescription drugs than they are on any other expenses combined. This is really intolerable. I think when we look at the reform to the Medicare system and think about